



“Café Literario” provides a delightful evening of music, poetry and art

September is “Cultural Month” in Aruba, and for the past four weeks the island has seen a flurry of events devoted to highlighting the many aspects of Aruba’s cultural community. Rounding out this wide variety of activities was a “Café Literario” at the Biblioteca Nacional in Oranjestad on Wednesday evening. The front hallway of the library was filled with an appreciative audience that was treated to renditions by some of Aruba’s finest writers of poetry and prose, plus musical and visual artists, hosted by Joyce Pereira and Olga Zaandam. A sampling of Aruban snacks and wines were available, and the lights were low, simulating an evening in a European Café.

Many faces were known to the audience, as renowned artist Stan Kuiperi explained his works that were on display in the library’s exhibition hall, and many were new, as any and all were invited to come before the gathering to recite their poetry, or play music. Among the many presenting that evening were recognized poets Filomena Wong and Olga Zaandam and Lady Ruth. Ramon Sharp and young Rosabelle Illes, both proved they could write poetry as beautifully in English, as well as their native language of Papiamentu. Others performing included Wilfred Jansen of the Young Poets Society and the society’s mentor, Natalie Geronimo. Catherine Provence, well known as a soprano entertained with pieces on the piano, as did Jeremy Lanooij. Rosalie Klein presented a photograph of dance diva Alydia Wever in folkloric dress that has now become a permanent part of the library’s collection on Aruban culture.

The evening finished with two lively performances by Maybelline Arends Croes on the cuartro, a regional instrument similar to the guitar. For the first two numbers she was accompanied by Karel Thijs on the clarinet. Afterwards, in what was a grand surprise for everyone, Padu Lampe, co-author of Aruba’s National Anthem stepped up from the audience to accompany Maybelline on the piano in a lively classic that would have had the audience up and dancing if there had been room to do so.

This lovely evening of music, prose, poetry, and art ran the gamut from humor, fables, and classical pieces to political commentary. It was thought provoking and entertaining, as not only was the audience treated to works by their favorite artists, but many new faces and thoughts were expressed before the microphone that evening in English, Spanish, Dutch and Papiamentu. It was a perfect way to finish off the month of September, a fitting example of the meaning of “Cultural Month.”